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News Releases



MAY 15, 2013 EL PASO, TX

HSI arrests former customs inspector for defrauding more than 50 people by producing, selling fake documents Federico "Freddy" Garcia Jr. defrauded people of \$100,000, special agents seek more victims

EL PASO, Texas — Special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) are seeking more victims of a local man who ran a false document scheme that defrauded more than 50 people out of about \$100,000.

Federico "Freddy" Garcia Jr., 39, a former U.S. Customs Service inspector from the 1990s, was arrested May 9 by HSI special agents at his home in the 1500 block of Bob Hope Drive. He remains in federal custody charged with fraud and misuse of visas, permits and other documents. HSI agents are seeking other people who Garcia may have victimized.

According to an arrest affidavit (<http://www.ice.gov/doclib/news/releases/2013/130515elpaso.pdf>), an investigation by HSI El Paso Public Safety Group revealed that for at least the past two years, Garcia was involved in selling counterfeit immigration documents, including employment authorization cards and B-1/B-2 non-immigrant visitor visas.

During the nearly four-month undercover investigation, HSI special agents conducted surveillance on Garcia. During that time he produced counterfeit documents for an undercover agent, who Garcia believed was an alien smuggler, according to court documents. Garcia provided various documents to the undercover agent, including a U.S. Department of State certification of report of birth of a U.S. born abroad; a copy of a U.S. certificate of naturalization; and two blank sheets of samples of U.S. citizen identification cards. He also gave the undercover agent a B-1/B-2 non-immigrant visa and an employment authorization card, which were also counterfeit.

Dennis A. Ulrich, special agent in charge of HSI El Paso, said visa fraud is a serious crime that poses a significant national security vulnerability. These cases are an enforcement priority for HSI. "HSI aggressively investigates and brings to justice those who potentially compromise the integrity of America's legal immigration system by providing counterfeit identities to people who are not eligible to live or work legally in the United States.

Garcia is alleged to have used his immigration law experience to victimize more than 50 people out of thousands of dollars. Garcia is scheduled to have his detention hearing in federal court May 15. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence of 15 years in federal prison.

Anyone who believes they may be a victim of Garcia's alleged false document scheme may call 1-866-347-2423.

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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